

## ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

**persuasive essay** essay that makes a clear and forceful claim, supports that claim with reasons and evidence, and responds to possible counterarguments

## HERE'S HOW: PREWRITING AND DRAFTING

**Step 1: List issues that matter to you.** You must show your strong commitment to your ideas, so write about an issue that you truly care about. Make sure there is a counterargument to the issue. You can't write a persuasive essay if everybody already agrees with you.

**Step 2: Write a claim.** In persuasive writing, the claim states your position on the issue. Your claim belongs in your introduction, and it should be clear and forceful. You can always revise it as you draft and edit your essay.

**Step 3: Decide on your reasons and evidence.** You need strong, clear reasons for your opinion. Reasons aren't enough to persuade, though. You need evidence to support your reasons. Evidence includes facts, statistics, and quotations or information from experts that help your reader understand why, how, and what for. Create a two-column chart, with one column for "Reasons" and the other for "Evidence." List all of the reasons you will cite in your paper, and then list evidence for each reason.

**Step 4: Answer counterarguments fully and completely.** Anticipate counterarguments and explain why you disagree with them. Help your reader dismiss the ideas that might cause them to disagree with you.

**Step 5: Plan your organization.** You can organize your essay by explaining each of your reasons and supporting evidence one by one, dealing with the counterarguments for each point. Another approach is to discuss all of your reasons and supporting evidence in the first several paragraphs and then address counterarguments at the end.

**Step 6: Use persuasive language.** No one needs to shout to persuade, but your sentences should sound firm and strong. They should say, between the lines, "I'm sure" or "I know."

**HERE’S HOW: REVISING AND EDITING**

**Step 7: Correct circular reasoning.** Circular reasoning means supporting a statement by merely repeating it in different words. Ask a peer reader to point out examples of circular reasoning in your essay. Replace circular reasoning with well-supported reasons and evidence.

**Step 8: Make sure your evidence makes sense and is fully explained.** Circle the fact, examples, and other details you used to support each reason. If you don’t have many circles, you need to give your reader more evidence to support your claim.

**Step 9: Revise for more persuasive language.** Use precise words instead of vague ones, such as *really* and *very*. Use questions and suggestions to engage your readers and keep them interested.

**Step 10: Craft a strong ending.** Make your main point one more time in a brief summary statement. Also, include a call to action that tells your reader what he or she should do.